

# PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE



**Connecticut**  
**COMMISSION**  
**ON  AGING**



**2002-2003 Annual Report**

# REPORTING TO POLICYMAKERS

Dear Governor Rowland, Members of the Legislature & Chief Elected Officials,

Upon reflection of the Commission's ten-year history, this year was undeniably the most challenging – and, surprisingly, the most rewarding.

Economic forces contributed to dramatic decreases in the State's workforce as well as reductions to critical programs and services in Connecticut. Nearly all facets of government were impacted – and the aging contingent was no exception. At the same time, legislative and executive decisions had to be made that compromised the availability of programs and services for persons of all ages, thus creating a ripple effect for our towns and cities. Clearly, weathering Connecticut's budget storm and its aftermath has tested our collective resolve and resiliency.

However, we are reminded and rewarded by *the people in our state making a difference*. Our faith in the aging network's ability to overcome adversity is steadfast. A powerful illustration of the network's true grit and responsiveness was demonstrated with the vast support showed across the state for the preservation of the independent Commission on Aging.

Additionally, Commission members rolled up their sleeves and elevated their level of involvement. Other people as well, with diverse perspectives, stepped forward to generously donate their time and expertise to enhance the work of the Commission on Aging. They stepped forward due to their belief in the important work and unique role of the Commission. Together, we have accomplished more than ever imagined. We have marshaled resources, raised public awareness, provided leadership, brought together diverse groups with a common mission, and interacted with the elderly community through education and outreach.

Not deterred by adversity and actively involved in diversified projects all benefiting the elderly and the State, we are pleased to report that the Commission has indeed refocused its energy and is creatively addressing these challenging times.

Julia Evans Starr  
Executive Director

Sandra Muller  
Chairman

## MARSHALING RESOURCES

*In 2003, two of the three Commission staff positions were eliminated leaving an Executive Director. Our modified budget of \$109,972 reflects this reduction.*

*Consequently, Commission Members have elevated their level of commitment, while other professionals also stepped forward to give the gift of their time, expertise, and historical knowledge to work on special projects for the Commission and the Long Term Care Advisory Council. Here are some of the people making a difference:*

*Bill Eddy, currently an AARP volunteer and LTC Advisory Council Member, formerly Treasurer of Shawmut National Corporation.  
...An insightful strategist and a motivator.*

*Christine Lewis, former Director of the State Unit on Aging and former President of the National Association of State Units on Aging.  
...The standard bearer of programs and services for elders for over 30 years.*

*Andrew Wright, former Lead Planning Analyst for the State Unit on Aging.  
...A market research professional with expertise in statistical analysis and planning.*

*Quincy Abbot, formerly a Senior Vice President of CIGNA (an actuary).  
Former President and Interim Executive Director of The Arc of the United States.  
... A nationally recognized champion for the provision of choices for persons with disabilities.*

# CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS

## TODAY AND TOMORROW

Did  
You  
Know  
?

Over 132,000 of Connecticut's elder citizens, including 5,000 women, served our nation in World War II and the Korean War.... Made Connecticut a leader in manufacturing and financial services in the 1950's and 1960's and are responsible for the prosperity that the state enjoyed in that period. They continue to volunteer in great numbers, pay taxes and provide a large bulk of the elder care.

In 1900, an American could expect to live for an average of 47 years. In 1997, the average life span was 77. In 1998 women at age 65 could expect another 19 years of life and men an additional 16 years.

The 60 and over population represents 17.7% of the total population or 601,835 people in Connecticut.

In Connecticut, there are 147 older women for every 100 older men. College graduation rates, labor force participation rates, and poverty rates differ significantly among older men and women.

Thirty percent of older Connecticut residents live alone.

There are 20,291 Connecticut grandparents responsible for raising grandchildren.

Nationally, 4.3 % of the 65+ population live in nursing homes in 2000. In Connecticut 6.3% of older residents live in nursing homes or other institutions.

There is a pervasive difference in health status and care among Connecticut's older cultural and ethnic communities.

— U.S. census 2002

### **TOMORROW'S ELDERS WILL REMAKE SOCIETY —**

As our nation's 77 million baby boomers — those born between 1946-1964 — have moved through each life stage, they have remade institutions and expectations. They dramatically expanded the labor force as millions of women began to work, they led the civil rights movement, they fought in Vietnam. In Connecticut, baby boomers are one million strong. They are responsible for Connecticut's prosperity in the 80's and 90's and brought new energy to the arts and community organizations. They spawned innovation after innovation and trend after trend. Today, baby boomers are the state's most visible leaders in nearly every field. Approximately, one in three of Connecticut citizens is a baby boomer. The oldest boomers will turn 62 in five years (eligible for Social Security). By 2031, every baby boomer will be over 65, and the oldest will be 85 years old. The implications are staggering. Our nation will change dramatically. Are we prepared?

#### **Opportunities:**

- Giving expanded life-spans new purpose
- Enhancing health through new and emerging technology
- Increasing work options for older adults
- Influencing public policy through vote

#### **Challenges:**

- Public, private, and personal capacity to care for more elders
- Increasing health care costs may widen the gap between the haves and have nots
- Helping today's uninformed young adults anticipate the costs and responsibilities of aging

***Knowing these opportunities and challenges must be faced, the Connecticut Commission on Aging seeks to provoke thought and stimulate action in these key areas: leadership, infrastructure, dedicated funding, elder independence, and individual financial preparations.***

# RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

## THROUGH EDUCATION • OUTREACH • DIALOGUE

**Annual Meeting 2002:** The theme was *Opportunities and Challenges of an Aging State and Nation*. The Commission assembled stakeholders from across the state (representatives of state and local government, policymakers, service providers, advocates, and consumers) to dialogue with an all-star roster of speakers including: Barbara Kennelly, President and CEO of The National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare; Senate President Kevin B. Sullivan; Richard Thau, President and Co-Founder of Third Millennium, Inc.; Waldo Klein, Ph.D. UConn Professor and Commission Member, and Brad Plebani, Esq., of the Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. Sponsors of the event were the American Express Financial Services and the Village at East Farms in Waterbury.



*Brad Plebani and Barbara Kennelly share insights at our 2002 Annual Meeting.*

**Community Meetings:** Per state statute, the Commission conducts annual public hearings on issues affecting the well-being of elderly in Connecticut. Over the last 10 years, the Commission has held nearly 30 public hearings across the state, listening to participants' concerns and answering critical questions. Feedback from these hearings helps the Commission chart its course of advocacy. Access to affordable prescription drugs, lack of housing options, access to transportation, and the rising cost of property taxes continue to worry our senior adults. In an on-going effort to bring these concerns to Connecticut's policymakers, the Commission provides hearing briefs to the Governor and the Legislature.

**Olmstead Forum:** To educate and inform policymakers about the 1999 Olmstead Supreme Court decision and states' responsibility for implementation, the Commission and the LTC Advisory Council held an educational forum in September '02. The event utilized Connecticut's resources, both past and present, by featuring people dedicated in their professional and personal lives to giving people of all ages "Choices": Darlene O'Connor, Ph.D. (Director, Long Term Care Policy at the Center for Health Policy and Research at UMass Medical School); May Terry, Cathy Ludlum, Quincy Abbot, and David Guttchen.

*In 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court in *L.C. & E.W. v. Olmstead*, ruled that keeping people in institutions when they are capable of living in the community with supports is discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, the federal government has encouraged states to plan for reforms — not only in the health arena —but also in the areas of transportation, housing, education and other social supports to fully integrate people with disabilities into the least restrictive settings. This ruling has a profound impact on older adults in Connecticut, of whom 42% have a disability.*

**Radio Show:** As a courtesy of Breakthrough to the Aging, the Commission co-hosts with radio personality Bill Pearse a show entitled the "Aging Process" on WTIC am. Issues and guests featured on the show have included Leslie Brett Executive Director of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women talking about health issues for older women and Kathy Freda discussing the merits of reverse mortgages.

**Public Speaking:** Commission members and staff spoke before numerous civic groups, provider organizations, public and state forums, and the General Assembly about issues affecting Connecticut elders and their families. Here's a sample of our various audiences: the Legislative Select Committee on Aging, Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging Legislative Forums, U.S. Senator Dodd's Health Care Forums, and the Groton Senior Center.

**Daily Assistance:** The Commission responds to thousands of phone calls, letters, and emails annually, providing the public with a personal and timely response to a wide range of questions and complex problems.

**Utilizing Technology:** The Commission is playing a lead role in developing a LTC consumer-driven website in order to help

□

This will enable them to make educated decisions about important areas of their lives. Our partners on this project are the Office of Policy and Management, the Long Term Care Advisory Council, and the Select Committee on Aging.

*Nationwide, people over the age of 55 constitute the fastest-growing group of internet users; their usage is forecasted to more than triple over the next five years.*

# PROVIDING LEADERSHIP

## CEAN: CONNECTICUT'S ELDER ACTION NETWORK

The Commission, through the creation of CEAN, has brought together the state's major elderly organizations representing the interests of older adults, to offer a cohesive voice on public policy issues affecting Connecticut's older citizens. CEAN organizations share information, expertise, and resources to develop and advance a responsible public policy agenda for elders. CEAN is chaired and staffed by the Commission. While recognizing the needs of all generations, as our constituency grows and resources shrink, it has become imperative that leaders work together to present a unified message representing the interests and welfare of Connecticut's 600,000 older citizens and their families.

### Executive Committee Members —

AARP-CT — Brenda Kelley  
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. — Judith Stein, Esq.  
CT Association of Area Agencies on Aging — Kate McEvoy, Esq.  
CT Association of Municipal Agents — Dianne Stone  
CT Association of Senior Center Personnel — Pat Schneider  
CT Coalition on Aging — Helen Raisz/Sharon Garrard  
CT Community Care, Inc. — Molly Rees Gavin  
CT Council of Senior Citizens, Inc. — Charlene Block  
CT Commission on Aging, Chair — Julia Evans Starr  
Sandra Muller

### *Throughout the 2003 Legislative Sessions, CEAN prioritized these key issues:*

- ▶ Restoration of funding for home delivered and congregate meals.
- ▶ Preservation of ConnPace.
- ▶ Preservation of the State Commission on Aging and its independence.

*“Through this important collaboration, leaders in the aging arena across the state work together to help elders and their families.” — Chair, Sandra K. Muller*

Cean also supports maintaining a strong State Unit on Aging (Elderly Services Division – Dept. of Social Services).

---

## LONG TERM CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

### *Working together by building consensus on a course of action that draws on the expertise, active involvement and goodwill of all parties...*

The Commission Co-Chairs and manages with Representative Peter Villano the LTC Advisory Council. This Council represents an active and remarkable collaboration of a most diverse group of providers, consumers and advocates for elders and for persons with disabilities. According to Connecticut Statutes Sec. 17b-338, the LTC Advisory Council advises and makes recommendations to the Long Term Care Planning Committee. Beyond that charge, the Advisory Council, creates and promotes legislation, is creating with its partners a consumer driven LTC website, and works closely with the LTC Planning Committee to develop a road map for LTC policy in Connecticut.

The Long Term Care Planning Committee, Chaired by David Guttchen of OPM, is composed of representatives from ten executive agencies and the Co-Chairs and Ranking Members of the Committees of Aging, Human Services, and Public Health. The Planning Committee's charge is to exchange information on long term care issues, to coordinate long term care policy development, and to establish a statewide plan for persons of all ages in need of long term care.

**The next LTC Plan will be presented to the General Assembly in January 2004.**

**The goal of the plan is to ensure that Connecticut residents have access to a full range of high-quality long-term care options that maximize autonomy, choice and dignity.**

# MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

## SERVING AS A LINK BETWEEN ELDERS & STATE GOVERNMENT

*Here's an overview of the partnerships that help to make a difference . . .*

- » Advisory Body to the State Unit on Aging
- » New England Coalition of State Advisory Councils on Aging
- » Task Force on Aging (and Mental Retardation)
- » Lifespan Respite Coalition
- » Connecticut's Women's Health Campaign
- » CT Home Care Program for Elders Advisory Committee
- » Grandparents as Parents Support Program (GAPS)
- » Louis & Joan M. Sirico Center Advisory Board
- » Nursing Home Transition Grant Housing Subcommittee

*As the Advisory body to the SUA, the Commission is a pioneering member of the New England Coalition of State Advisory Councils on Aging. This New England Consortium meets biannually to discuss issues facing respective states and to collaborate on pressing federal issues. In 2004, the Commission will become the Chair of this council.*

## WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

*The Commission on Aging shall: meet at least monthly with the Commissioner and the head of the Division of Elderly Services of the Department of Social Services to review and comment on the policies and procedures of the department concerning the elderly;*

*review and comment on the budget of the Division of Elderly Services of the Department of Social Services . . .*

*The commission shall be within the Department of Social Services for administrative purposes only.*

**Reviewing the Policy and Procedures of the Department:** Undeniably, a reduction in the state workforce has impacted DSS. Due to state lay-offs and early retirements DSS lost approximately 21% of their staff. For the Elderly Services Division, staff was reduced by approximately 25%. At the same time, the lean staff of the LTC Ombudsman's office was reduced as well. The Commission remains concerned about the capability of these offices to address the needs of an aging population.

**State Unit on Aging:** The Elderly Services Division of the Department of Social Services, also known as the State Unit on Aging (SUA), administers critical programs and services for older adults, such as the Alzheimer's Respite Program, the Elderly Nutrition Program, and Choices. Although the Commission and the SUA are two separate entities with very distinct yet important roles, they work closely together and are stronger because of each other's existence.

The former Director of the SUA, Christine Lewis, worked closely with the Commission over the course of the past several years and represented the Commissioner of Social Services, Patricia Wilson-Coker, as a board member. This role is now being performed by Pam Gianni, Interim Director.

As the advisory body to the State Unit on Aging, the Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the SUA's State Plan on Aging, reviews and comments on their budget, partners with them on various projects and initiatives, and advocates on their behalf.

**Commenting on the SUA Budget:** The Commission regularly provides information to policymakers about the implications of various modifications to the Department's budget. For the fiscal year '02-03, the budget of the State Unit on Aging suffered a loss of \$250,000 dollars. More specifically, the reduction affected the elderly nutrition programs (congregate and home-delivered meals). The Legislature responded by restoring the funding in August 2003.

# COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

According to State Statute, “The Commission on aging shall be composed of eleven voting members who are knowledgeable about areas of interest to the elderly... The Commission shall also include the following ex-officio nonvoting members. . .” Our Commission members are dedicated volunteers who bring a wealth of knowledge, qualifications and insight to our initiatives. Past and present, their roles in Connecticut include University Professor, Directors of state-of-the-art Senior Centers, State LTC Ombudsman, Director of the State Unit on Aging, President of AARP-CT, Director of Nursing in Nursing Homes, Gerontologist, consumers, Director of Elderly Services of a large municipality, Advisors to Area Agencies on Aging. Together they work to raise the bar on quality care and accessible services for Connecticut’s elders.

## VOTING MEMBERS

Chairman Sandra K. Muller, - Cromwell

Appointed by Governor John G. Rowland

Vice Chairman Mary McCabe, - Westbrook

Appointed by Senate Pro Tempore, Kevin B. Sullivan

Treasurer Kathryn J. Freda, - West Simsbury

Appointed by Governor John G. Rowland

Executive Committee Member

Waldo Klein, Ph.D., MSW, - Storrs

Appointed by former House Majority Leader, David Pudlin

Ida Arbitman, - Hamden

Appointed by Speaker of the House, Moira Lyons

Judith Henchar, - Stamford

Appointed by Senate Minority Leader, Louis DeLuca

Don Dimenstein, - New Haven

Appointed by Governor John G. Rowland

Carol Tillman Parrish, - Hartford

Appointed by Governor John G. Rowland

Gerd Weindling, - Trumbull

Appointed by Governor John G. Rowland

Honorary Member

Nancy S. Gyurko, - Torrington

Welcome to Christine Lewis of South Windsor

Appointed by Senate Majority Leader, Martin Looney

Thank you to outgoing members

Scott G. Douglass and Marjorie R. Valentin

## STAFF

Julia Evans Starr, Executive Director

*We would also like to express our deep appreciation for the years of hard work and loyalty of former staff members Sarah Gauger and Juanita Allen.*

## EX-OFFICIO (NON VOTING) MEMBERS

Commissioner Patricia Wilson-Coker

Department of Social Services

Represented by Christine Lewis (retired 5/03)

Pam Giannini

Commissioner Susan F. Cogswell

Department of Insurance

Represented by David Loughlin (retired 6/03)

Represented by Cliff Slicer

Commissioner Shaun Cashman

Department of Labor

Represented by Susan Deschamplain

Acting Commissioner Norma Gyle R.N., Ph.D.

Department of Public Health

Represented by Barbara Yard

Acting Commissioner James F. Byrnes, Jr.

Department of Transportation

Represented by Ellen Lawrence

Commissioner Thomas Kirk, Jr., Ph.D.

Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services

Represented by Jennifer Glick

Commissioner Peter H. O’Meara

Department of Mental Retardation

Represented by Eileen Gamba

Commissioner James Abromaitis

Department of Economic & Community Development

Represented by Kathy Matthews (retired 6/03)

Senator Mary Ann Handley

Chair, Human Services Committee

Representative Peter Villano

Chair, Human Services Committee

Senator John A. Kissel

Ranking Member, Human Services Committee

Representative Lile R. Gibbons

Ranking Member, Human Services Committee

*In Appreciation —*

*This year, our 10th year, the Commission was the benefactor of an unprecedented level of support and encouragement from our fellow colleagues, friends, and neighbors. Through the actions of thousands of people across the state, the Commission was able to accomplish more than imagined. Our gratitude is immense.*

*At the very top of the long and distinguished list of people to acknowledge are Representative Peter Villano and Representative Roberta Willis. Their demonstrated commitment to elder advocacy and their tenacity throughout the year proved essential and effective. The Commission is honored to recognize these legislators as the recipients of the Commission's Annual Appreciation Award 2003.*

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has."*

*— Margaret Mead*

---

State of Connecticut  
Commission on Aging  
25 Sigourney Street (12th floor)  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Phone: 860.424.5360

Fax: 860.424.4985

commission.aging@po.state.ct.us  
www.coa.state.ct.us

cover photo:  
Maria Rosa Adorno with  
her grandson David Negron

*Our Mission —*

To advocate on behalf of elderly persons in Connecticut by direct involvement, assessing the impact of current and proposed initiatives, promoting their interests and reporting to the Governor and the Legislature.

*Our Oversight Includes —*

- Providing Leadership
- Marshalling Resources
- Raising Public Awareness
- Giving Older Adults a Seat in State Government
- Bringing Together Diverse Groups with Common Mission
- Interacting with the Elderly Community Through Education and Outreach